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MEMORANDUM FOR Brian Monaghan
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Attention: Management Training Branch
 Field Division

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Subject: Group Quarters Enumeration Observation Report-St. Louis, Missouri

I. Introduction

On April 18-20, 2000, I was in St. Louis, Missouri to observe Group Quarters (GQ) Enumeration and visit the Local Census Office (LCO). Although the GQ Enumeration was nearly complete for that area, my contacts were very helpful in taking time to direct me to five GQs that still needed to be enumerated and in telling me about activities taking place at the LCO. Out at the GQs, I observed two teams of enumerators and both teams had differing styles. One team followed the enumeration procedures as outlined in the GQ Enumerator's Job Aid manual more closely, and it was apparent that the data is more likely to be accurate when these procedures are followed.

II. Group Quarters Enumeration

The first GQ I visited was a veteran's home for the aged. I was sent to join two enumerators who were already at the GQ getting a roster from the GQ contact. I joined them in a private room where they had Individual Census Reports (ICRs) separated by form type in two stacks. The GQ was enumerated from the roster list provided by the GQ contact which contained name, age, date of birth, sex, and race from administrative records. This method was used because the GQ contact and the enumerators did not expect the residents to be able to fill out the forms or to be able to answer the questions in an interview. Although the enumerators said they had specified to the GQ contact that Hispanic Origin information was also needed, the roster labeled residents as "Black" or

“White” and did not specifically state whether or not residents were Hispanic. One enumerator suspected that some of the names sounded Hispanic, but he assumed that the roster would have labeled a resident as Hispanic had it applied to any resident. In this situation, not seeing or talking to the residents directly would seem to be a disadvantage especially for race and origin data.

The home had about 195 residents. The enumerators had listed all the names onto Form D-116, Group Quarters Listing Sheets and were filling out an ICR for each name. They were careful to select the correct form type for each name using the form type designation on the D-116. The same type of data was recorded for each person whether the form type designation was short or long. Each long form was marked incomplete on the D-116, since the long form data was not available from the information provided by the GQ contact. If they were not able to understand the information on the roster for a name, they made a note to ask the GQ contact for clarification. The enumerators planned to review each other’s ICRs when they reached the end of the roster. These enumerators appeared to be very conscientious and thorough.

The remaining GQs were enumerated by a team that did not follow the procedures outlined in the manual as closely as the first team. One of their GQs I observed was a residential nursing home with 28 residents. The enumeration team consisted of a crew leader and two enumerators. The crew leader (CL) asked the GQ contact if she thought the residents could fill out the forms themselves. The GQ contact doubted it and offered access to the administrative records. The CL then asked for a table to work at and the contact offered the dining room table. This was not a private area but the CL did not ask for privacy. The dining room was connected with the TV room where several residents were watching TV and one resident was watching the TV from the dining room table.

This team did not list the names of the residents on the D-116 before filling out ICRs. An ICR would be filled out from one administrative record then the name of the resident would be listed on the D-116. This led to some confusion as to when to use the long form ICR. If the D-116 showed that a long form should have been used for a resident, then either the resident would be put on another line or the form type designation of “L” would be crossed out and “S” would be written in. Then a long form would be used for the next resident. The form types were not stacked separately. Each enumerator had her own stack of mixed forms. Name, sex, age, date of birth, and race were collected from the administrative records. I asked the team if any other information could be found in these records and was told “no”.

The next GQ was a children’s home with 35 residents. The CL and an enumerator used a roster provided by the GQ contact. The roster included name, sex, age, date of birth, and race information. We were allowed to work in an area with a large table surrounded by staff offices. This area was private except for the few times that a staff member would walk out of or into one of the offices.

Unlike the first enumerator team I met, I noted that this second team was not careful to use only capital letters when filling out the ICRs. The CL checked the ICRs for completeness only part of the time. Long form ICRs were often marked complete on the D-116s even though they contained only the "partial interview" data. Sometimes they were marked incomplete. I observed that at the end of the D-116 one long form was skipped entirely after a short form had been filled out by mistake.

The next GQ was a nursing college with an expected population of 68. The CL and enumerators were planning to use administrative records but the GQ contact did not agree to this. The team then counted out a number of ICRs, putting them into a stack by designated form type, and left the forms in one large envelope to give to the GQ contact. I asked what the GQ contact would do with them. The CL said he was not sure but thought that the GQ contact would probably fill out the ICRs using administrative records just as the team had planned to do. The enumerator wondered, out of the CL's hearing, why this would be the case since students should be able to fill out their own forms. If the forms were not going to be filled out from administrative records, the manual is clear that each ICR should be placed in a separate envelope for each resident with a Privacy Act Notice and a mechanical pencil. I was not with the CL when he gave the contact the envelope of forms so I do not know what instructions were given to the contact.

The final GQ was another residential home for the aged with an expected population of 28. As at the second GQ, the GQ contact allowed the team to pull administrative records. The team filled out the ICRs in an office that was a walk-through space. Residents and staff came through often and the doors on both sides were left open. Again, a name was listed on the D-116 after the ICR was filled out and only name, age, date of birth, and race were collected from the administrative records.

III. Conclusion and Recommendations

My LCO contacts for the area were very friendly and helpful to me during my time there. From the GQ enumerations I observed, it appeared that one enumeration team did not obtain suitable private places to obtain the data. It is important to remind the crew leaders and enumerators throughout the operation that only authorized census personnel may see the ICRs so private work areas should be found. Since administrative records are to be used as a last resort, the decision to use them for an entire GQ may best be approved by the Field Operation Supervisor in consultation with the GQ contact before the enumeration team goes out. The reasons for their use should be verified as absolutely necessary for each resident. Also, the designated 1-in-6 sample will more likely be drawn correctly if the names are listed on the D-116 form before the ICRs are assigned to residents. Although I did not have the opportunity to observe the collection of sample data, the quality of the sample data depends on the sample being drawn correctly and on the data being collected.

cc:

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